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Irvin Yalom önderliğinde organize edilen ve dünyaca ünlü terapistlerin ve terapi kuramı kurucularının, ekollerin en önemli temsilcilerinin psikoterapi seanslarını video olarak izlemek ve seans hakkındaki yorumlarını dinlemek ve bu kursları (American Psychological Association (APA) başta olmak üzere Social Workers (ASWB) New York State Social Workers (NYSED BSW) New York State Mental Health Practitioners (NYSED MHP) Certified Counselors (NBCC) Addiction Counselors (NAADAC) MFTs and LCSW (CA BBS) California Nurses (BRN) Canadian Counsellors kurumlarından CE (Continuing Education-Sürekli Eğitim) akreditasyonlu sertifikayla belgelendirmek isterseniz veritabanımıza bireysel veya kurumsal olarak erişmek için bizimle iletişime geçebilirsiniz.



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Instructor's Manual
for
HARVILLE HENDRIX
ON THE
HEALING RELATIONSHIP
WITH RANDALL C. WYATT

HARVILLE HENDRIX, PHD

by

Randall C. Wyatt, PhD & Erika L. Seid, MA



The *Instructor's Manual* accompanies the DVD *Harville Hendrix on The Healing Relationship, with Randall C. Wyatt* (Institutional/Instructor's Version). Video available at www.psychotherapy.net.

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Teaching and Training: Instructors, training directors and facilitators

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Instructor's Manual for Harville Hendrix on The Healing Relationship

with Randall C. Wyatt

Harville Hendrix, PhD with Randall C. Wyatt, PhD

Cover design by Sabine Grand

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Instructor's Manual for

HARVILLE HENDRIX ON THE HEALING RELATIONSHIP WITH RANDALL C. WYATT

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Tips for Making the Best Use of the DVD

1. USE THE TRANSCRIPTS

Make notes in the video **Transcript** for future reference; the next time you show the video you will have them available. Highlight or notate key moments in the video to better facilitate discussion during the video and post-viewing.

2. PREPARE VIEWER'S BEFOREHAND

Share information with viewers from the section **What is Imago Relationship Therapy**, so that they have a framework for listening to this interview with Harville Hendrix.

3. GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Pause the video at different points to elicit viewers' observations and reactions to the concepts presented. The **Discussion Questions** provide ideas about key points that can stimulate rich discussions, self-reflection and learning.

4. LET IT FLOW

Allow the interview to play out so viewers can appreciate the flow of the conversation. It is best to watch the full video since issues untouched in earlier parts of the interview may be covered later. Encourage viewers to voice their opinions; no therapist is perfect! What do viewers think makes sense and does not make sense in Hendrix's approach? It is crucial for students and therapists to develop the ability to effectively critique others' work as well as their own.

5. TRY OUT IMAGO DIALOGUE

Review the chapter **The Imago Dialogue** – 101 on page 8 with participants. Break participants into groups of three and have them role-play an Imago couples therapy session. In the role-play, the therapist will help the couple learn and practice one or more of the Imago dialogue steps: mirroring, validation and empathy. The couple may use the scripts provided in the Directions for a simple Imago dialogue, or improvise their own.

After the role-plays, have the groups come together to discuss their experiences. First have the clients share their experiences, and then have the therapists talk about their experiences in the session. Finally, open up a general discussion on what participants learned about Imago dialogue.

6. SUGGEST READINGS TO ENRICH VIDEO MATERIAL

Assign readings from **Suggestions for Further Readings and Websites** prior to viewing. You can also time the video to coincide with other course or training materials on related topics.

7. ASSIGN A REACTION PAPER

See suggestions in **Reaction Paper** section.

8. PERSPECTIVE ON VIDEOS AND THE PERSONALITY OF THE THERAPIST

Every psychotherapy is unique, influenced as much by the personality and style of the therapist as by the use of specific techniques and theories. Thus, while we can certainly pick up ideas from master therapists, viewers must make the best use of relevant theory, technique and research that best fits their own personal style and the needs of their clients.

What is Imago Relationship Therapy?

Adapted from the website of Imago Relationships International
<http://gettingtheloveyouwant.com>

Harville Hendrix and Helen LaKelly Hunt created the Imago model based on their experience of mending relationships, including their own marriage. Imago Relationship Therapy is a way to create stronger relationships, by helping clients become more aware of the way that we are all deeply interconnected. It offers insights into the unconscious agenda clients bring to their relationships. With this information, clients can begin to co-operate with their unconscious agenda and choose to grow together in creative, non-controlling, and healing ways that create understanding and connection.

Imago Relationship Theory purports that the romantic love experienced at the beginning of a relationship is how the unconscious seeks to restore the feeling of early childhood joyful aliveness. Clients find their “Imago match” by attracting people who emotionally resemble their primary caretakers, unknowingly believing that the object of their adult attraction can provide unmet emotional needs from childhood. However, a partner who is an “Imago match” resembles both the positive and the negative qualities of primary caretakers, including those that prevented early caretakers from providing for all the child’s needs. Clients can become confused and disillusioned when they realize that their partner is not able to meet their deepest emotional needs.

Imago Relationship Therapy helps clients become aware of the unconscious agenda of romantic love, and to see that conflict in relationships is a wonderful opportunity for growth. The Imago dialogue provides a safe and supportive set of tools for partners to explore these deep issues.

The Imago Dialogue – 101

By Tim Atkinson, Executive Director,
Imago Relationships International

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Why dialogue?

Dialogue can help you to keep relationships fresh and dynamic, and to get beneath conflict to rediscover a deeper connection. If I try to resolve conflict in my relationship without creating a true connection with my partner, I may just be patching things up until the next big fight comes along, or even reinforcing the problem. Imago theory shows that most conflicts that have a painful “charge” are only 10% about the present situation and 90% about some past wound that is causing pain now. Imagine if you could truly heal old wounds. Your partner is the ideal person to help you do just that!

Dialogue vs. discussion

Often when I am listening to my partner, I might also be planning how to respond. I may be fervently figuring out how to show her that she is wrong, or how to defend myself from things she says that I don't want to hear. My reply would contain carefully chosen words which show just how much I am “in the right,” and are designed so I don't have to hear any more.

What I have described is not really a discussion between me and my partner. It's what the philosopher Martin Buber called an “I-It” relationship. I am not dealing with her reality, and I'm working hard to give her a fake shiny version of me.

When we try to solve conflict in an “I-It” discussion, we may get a solution which works for a while. But it is unlikely to be the best solution for us both long-term, and leaves the true underlying reasons for conflict unresolved.

Dialogue helps people cut through their natural defenses to create a more genuine connection, which Buber called “I-You.” When we are both honestly and openly involved in exploring issues, we can discover the real source of pain. Listening and talking about this in a loving, safe space can open up within ourselves amazing potential for an improved relationship.

When my partner and I fell in love, we had a sense of destiny drawing us together. It felt like there was a path together which was greater than the course of our separate lives. Dialogue enables us to unfold that path, and experience the love we dreamed of.

“Your partner is another person – Get it!” (Harville Hendrix)

- There are many ways in which dialogue can enrich our lives:
- We can make better decisions, because we can share together a full understanding of what we both need.
- It’s a lot more fun and passionate. I get to continue discovering the amazing other person who loves me.
- It can be a wonderful path of discovery, not just of my partner, but about me. Often I find that our partner’s thinks better of me, than I do of myself.

Imago dialogue starts with safety

If I am going to meet others in an authentic way, and lower my protective shell, I need to feel safe. The structure of the Imago dialogue provides safety. The first rule is to banish all shame, blame and criticism. That might sound tough if I am really angry at my partner for all the things they did or didn’t do. How can I tell them how much they are hurting me, if I can’t criticize?

But I also need to make it safe for my partner to listen to me. And that means to always talk about my own feelings, not about their actions. What does this mean to me? Why am I frustrated? What do I feel? The key is to make it easy for my partner to remain open, and to be available to hear.

Stop Talking, Start Connecting

Listening to my partner may be the most difficult part of the Imago dialogue, especially if we are going to talk about a hard subject. Am I going to hear something painful? Will I want to jump out of my chair and run out? Will I want to shout and deny it?

Listening well can sometimes be a very courageous act. To be available to listen and truly hear what concerns your partner means putting aside all my spontaneous reactions to it. As the words come out, my first reaction might be to think “No – she’s got it wrong – it’s not like that!” The key to creating an “I-You” relationship is to put that aside, and instead listen without judgment. I need to open myself up to hearing my partner’s reality and, by hearing that, to truly connect with her. If I deny it, then I break the connection, and start an argument.

Try it. Practice.

Create space for the relationship

Before you start to dialogue, it’s good to create some space where your relationship can grow. You can do this in the room, by sitting on facing chairs, knees close together, with eye contact. But it’s also a good idea to spend a few moments quietly too, and become aware of the two of you. Let your breathing be quiet, and remind yourself to be calm, with no shame, blame or criticism as you speak, no judgment as you listen.

Something beautiful is being created between you. Martin Buber called it the “sacred space” when two people met as “I-You”.

Now you can start!

The steps of Imago Dialogue

Imago Dialogue is a unique three step process for connection, developed by Harville Hendrix PhD and Helen LaKelly Hunt PhD. Although it looks simple, the process was formulated through extensive study of psychological theories of relationship, and clinical work with couples.

The three steps are Mirroring, Validation and Empathy, and they are described in detail below. The essence of dialogue is any conversation in which people agree to listen to others without judgment, and accept their views as equally valid as their own. We have found the Imago dialogue to be a particularly effective way to start off on your journey to connection.

You can find directions on how to use the Imago dialogue here. What follows is a description of how to use each step.

The Imago Dialogue is initiated when a partner asks for an appointment and the other partner agrees to participate.

1. Mirroring

Using “I” language, one person sends a “message” to convey his/her thoughts, feelings, or experiences to the Receiver (“I feel,” “I love,” “I need ...”). They should avoid shaming, blaming or criticizing their partner, and instead talk about themselves.

In response, the Receiver echoes the Sender’s message word-for-word or by paraphrasing, using a lead sentence like, “Let me see if I’ve got you. You said...”

Mirroring helps me to listen to what the other person is actually saying rather than listening to the reactions and responses going on in my heads while my partner is talking.

Then there’s a beautiful question the receiver can ask. “Is There More?” When I ask that question I leave a little time, to show I really mean it, and want to hear more. Often my partner might pause “Well no....er..let me see...maybe there is.” Often as they are given space and time, they will go deeper and share more with me, and that sharing can be the most fascinating part.

Keep on with it. You might be more encouraging - “Wow. Interesting. Is there more about that?” The more I reassure my partner that I am open to what she is saying, the more I can voyage on a wonderful journey into her world, and experience connection, even if do find the subject area challenging or unfamiliar

When my partner says “No, that’s all”, then I can try a summary. “So,

in summary I heard you say that..... “ Then check you got it all. My partner might often say “Well you missed this little bit – and it’s quite important to me that you hear it.”

2. Validation

When I mirror my partner well, they will probably already be feeling that I have heard their point of view, and seen that for them it is valid. But it’s nice to say that too.

This part of the process can be quite hard too, if my partner has a very different perspective on things from me. But to be connected, it’s important for me to recognize that what my partner says makes sense for her. Sometimes her view might be so different from mine that I am tempted to think that she must be wrong. But in dialogue, creating the connection is paramount. Who is right and who is wrong doesn’t matter. Harville Hendrix likes to say: “You can be right, or you can be married!” With this process, you might even discover that you can find a solution together where it doesn’t matter whether either of you are right or wrong over this issue, because the underlying pain is what really needs to be addressed. Precisely because you are in relationship with another person, it is healthy to be able to accept that you hold different viewpoints.

After I have summarized my partner, I can validate them by simply saying “That makes sense to me.” I don’t have to agree with her, but show that I respect her reality. If I can, I might go on “That makes sense to me because....”

Sometimes as I watch my partner when I see this, I can see a physical sign of relief. It’s a lovely thing to have your views validated by another.

3. Empathy

The third and final step of the Imago Dialogue is empathy.

In the empathy step, I imagine what my partner might be feeling. Feelings are simple words like “Angry, Sad, Lonely, Afraid, Happy, Joyful etc:”

I would just ask my partner “I imagine you might be feeling afraid,

and perhaps a little sad too. Is that what you are feeling?" Then I check in with my partner, and if she shares other feelings then mirror them to show I heard. "Ah, a little excited too."

Did you try that with your partner? How do you feel? Did it help you understand them a little more, and bring you closer? I hope so. It has made a huge difference in my life.

Directions for a simple Imago dialogue

You can begin to use the Imago Dialogue to share with your partner something that concerns you, and that you would like to share with them. A great way to start using the dialogue is to share something that you appreciate about your partner. Try it, and see how you feel when your partner mirrors back your appreciation of them.

Here are some specific phrases you can use as you practice dialogue

Sender

I would like to dialogue about . . .

Is now okay?

I feel . . .

I love . . .

I need . . .

What's bothering me is . . .

Receiver

1. Mirroring

Let me see if I've got you.

I heard you say . . . or You said . . .

Am I getting you? or Did I get that?

Is there more about that?

Summary mirror

Let me see if I got it all . . .?

Am I getting you? Did I get all of that?
or Is that a good summary?

2. Validation

You make sense to me, and what makes sense is . . .

I can understand that . . .given that . . .

I can see how you would see it that way because sometimes I do . . .

3. Empathy

I imagine you might be feeling . . .

Is that what you're feeling?

Switch Roles

Reaction Paper for Classes and Training

Video: Harville Hendrix on the Healing Relationship with Randall C. Wyatt

- **Assignment:** Complete this reaction paper and return it by the date noted by the facilitator.

- **Suggestions for Viewers:** Take notes on these questions while viewing the video and complete the reaction paper afterwards, or use the questions as a way to approach the discussion. Respond to each question below.

- **Length and Style:** 2-4 pages double-spaced. Be brief and concise. Do NOT provide a full synopsis of the video. This is meant to be a brief reaction paper that you write soon after watching the video—we want your ideas and reactions.

What to Write: Respond to the following questions in your reaction paper:

1. Key points: What important points did you learn about Imago Relationship therapy and about couples therapy in general from watching this video? What stands out in how Hendrix works?

2. What I found most helpful: What was most beneficial to you about the issues presented? What tools or perspectives did you find helpful and might you use in your own work? What challenged you to think in a new way?

3. What does not make sense: What concepts or strategies did not make sense to you? Did anything push your buttons or bring about a sense of resistance in you, or just not fit with your own style or comfort zone? Explore these questions.

4. How I would do it differently: What might you do differently from what Hendrix describes in this video? Be specific in what different approaches, strategies and techniques you would or do apply in working with couples.

5. Other Questions/Reactions: What questions or reactions did you have as you viewed the video? Other comments, thoughts or feelings?

Suggestions for Further Readings, Websites and Videos

BOOKS

Berger, R. (1999). *Preventive Approaches in Couples Therapy*. New York: Routledge.

Brown, R. (1999). *Imago Relationship Therapy: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. Hoboken: Wiley.

Hannah, M. T. & Luquet, W. (Eds) (1998). *Healing in the Relational Paradigm: The Imago Relationship Therapy Casebook*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.

Hendrix, H. & Hunt, H. (2005). *Receiving Love*. New York: Atria Books.

Luquet, W. (2006). *Short-Term Couples Therapy: The Imago Model in Action*. New York: Brunner-Routledge.

Mason, R. C., Hannah, M. T., Luquet, W. & Hendrix, H. (2005). *Imago Relationship Therapy: Perspective on Theory*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

WEB RESOURCES

Imago Relationships International

<http://gettingtheloveyouwant.com>

Harville Hendrix, PhD

www.harvillehendrix.org

RELATED VIDEOS AVAILABLE
AT WWW.PSYCHOTHERAPY.NET

The Angry Couple: Conflict Focused Treatment

–Susan Heitler

Couples Therapy: An Introduction

–Ellen Bader & Dan Wile

Couples Therapy for Addictions

–Barbara S. McCrady

Couples Therapy for Infertility

–The Ackerman Institute

Connecting with Our Kids:

Communication that Promotes Closeness & Confidence

–George Papageorge

Positive Psychology and Psychotherapy

–Martin Seligman with Randall C. Wyatt

*Psychotherapy with Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Clients,
Program 3: Relationships, Families and Couples*

Counseling –Ron Scott (Producer)

Group Discussion Questions

Teachers and professors, counselors, therapists, training directors and facilitators may use a few or all of these discussion questions keyed to different segments of the video.

ALL HEALING IS RELATIONAL

- 1. The Basics:** What do you make of Hendrix' view that all healing is relational? Does it make sense to you in your own life? How so?

HEALING THE RUPTURE

2. Source of Healing: What do you think about Hendrix's premise that couplehood is the most powerful source of healing there is? How does this belief fit with your personal and professional experiences of couplehood? If you work primarily with individuals, in what ways could Hendrix's philosophy impact your therapy with these clients?

3. Self-Absorption: *Hendrix states that self-absorption produced by pain causes people to lose the awareness of their connectedness and to experience the illusion that they are separate, isolated and alone.* How do you react to this framework of pain, isolation and connectedness? Does his idea that becoming aware of one's own connectedness to others is a key to decreasing intrapsychic pain make sense to you? How do you understand the interactions among pain, self-absorption and connection?

THE IMAGO DIALOGUE PROCESS

4. Getting into Conflict: What do you think about Hendrix's rule in couple therapy that he does not allow clients to engage in conflict in his office? Does his reasoning that *if he allows it then he condones it* make sense to you? What approach do you take with conflicts that are often part of what brings couples into therapy?

5. Working on the Relationship: *Hendrix indicates that there is an unconscious but widespread false assumption that relationships that you have to work on are not good relationships.* Do you

agree or disagree? Do you believe that all relationships need work? How much work is the right amount? Could there be a point in the therapy when you, as the therapist, might come to see a given relationship as unworkable, or requiring more work for the couple than it is worth? What then?

GETTING SMART IN RELATIONSHIPS

6. Safety: Hendrix talks a lot about making the relationship safe.

What does this mean to you? What constitutes a safe relationship to you? Do you think of safety as being different for different people? If so, how would you work with clients to identify what each partner needs to feel safe in the relationship?

RECEIVING THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT

7. Defense Against Receiving: What do you think about the Imago Therapy concept of the defense against receptivity? What do you think about working with people's deep, unconscious, intrapsychic processes in a couples therapy context? How do you decide how deep to go into one person's unconscious in couples therapy, or at what point do you think this work is more appropriate for individual therapy? Talk about your responses here.

WHAT HENDRIX LEARNED FROM HIS MARRIAGE

8. Relational Healing: What does relational healing mean to you? Listening to Hendrix's discussion of negativity, the amygdala and relational healing, can you relate to how he puts those items together? Talk about any ways your definition of relational healing differs from or expands on his.

WORKING IN A RELATIONAL PARADIGM

9. Therapist as Expert: How do you see the role of the therapist in Imago Therapy as different or similar to that of other styles of couples therapy? Does it seem that the therapist is less or more of an "expert" in this approach? What would be challenging or difficult for you about weaving Imago therapy into the way you already practice?

Complete Transcript of Harville Hendrix on The Healing Relationship, with Randall C. Wyatt

ALL HEALING IS RELATIONAL

Randall Wyatt: Today we're here with Dr. Harville Hendrix. We'll be talking about couples, relationships and marriage and whatever else comes up. Welcome, Harville.

Harville Hendrix: Thank you. Delighted to be here.

Wyatt: Good. The first thing I want to mention to you is you've said, "All healing is relational."

Hendrix: Yes.

Wyatt: What does that mean to you?

Hendrix: Well, what it means is that there's a shift going on in our understanding of human nature, and the shift is away from an understanding of individuals being in some sense "encapsulated" inside their skin, what we call the paradigm of separation or the individual.... It comes from Darwin. It comes from Newton, comes from Freud and so forth, in which healing was presumed to be some sort of resolution of struggles, conflicts and so forth inside the person. Or it was an inside healing that occurred as a result of a change in external relationships, of being in a better environment than you were as a parent, or the parents changing.

So that's an intrapsychic model of healing where healing is inside. I've spent all my time—well, all my time since the mid-70s—working with couples, and prior to that I was a psychotherapist for about 15 years, in which I only worked with individuals, worked in that model, that the individual gets healed inside.

I began to work with couples and I discovered something else—still it was about 10 years after I started focusing on them—that couples get better, that their life changes, their relationship changes not so

much when they make internal changes that they then bring to the relationship to make it better, but when they make relational changes. That is, they change the quality of their interaction, the quality of their attitude toward each other, the quality of their consciousness about each other. In other words, they begin to focus on the partnership, on the relationship, and that when that happens and that changes and becomes, you know, following certain parameters, it's a safe relationship—it's a place where they can exist without defenses; they can relate to each other without fear—something happens to them intrapsychically in that, that.... So there's intrapsychic shifts.

But if this “space between” that Helen and I, that we have located, we call it “the between,” after Martin Buber who wrote the I-Thou relationship and his focus was on “the between is where love dwells, where God is” and so forth. If you focus on that between and hold it sacred, hold it free from negativity, hold it as a special place, then the intrapsychic stuff, you know, quiets down. But if you rupture the space, then the intrapsychic stuff gets reactivated.

So after some years of looking at this, we came to the conclusion....

Wyatt: We being....

Hendrix: We, Helen and me and Imago relationship therapists, we have about 2000 therapists around the world and a faculty of about 20, so we....

Wyatt: Helen, meaning your wife.

Hendrix: Helen is my, Helen LaKelly Hunt is my.... Yes. I'm assuming everybody knows Helen. Helen LaKelly Hunt...

Wyatt: I'd like to introduce her.

Hendrix: ...who is my wife, my partner in life and work, and we are also co-creators of Imago relationship therapy. Started the conversation the night we met, in fact, about why do men and women have such difficulty being together. We were both at, were divorced and were, we were beginning our relationship and we were wondering how is it that wonderful people like us wind up divorced. And so it became a serious—just, that's a slight shift—but it became a serious conversation that ultimately led to the creation of Imago relationship therapy and

about 10 books now has come out of that conversation.

So it is a “we” in the sense that whatever—She’s not a therapist. She has psychological training in her background, but she became active in the women’s movement and has done most of her work there, but we’re, but also she works with me. We do workshops, seminars and all kinds of things together in Imago. So it is a collective “we,” and we process everything.

And it finally got clear that it appears that if you, that that relation, that that healing occurs, does not occur, is not something that you go inside, you change something and then you’re permanent and you’re not vulnerable to that stimulus anymore. That healing becomes permanent when you change the environment within which the stimulus occurs. In other words, the stimulus is removed. Then after awhile...

Now we’re learning now from Dan Siegel that when you change a repetitively, a particular set of interactions, you develop new neural pathways but the old neural pathways don’t go away. It’s like they become a, the sewer, the sewer of negativity is still there but you develop another highway of safety, of caring, of love and kindness and so forth and you can switch to that. This other one may be triggered sometime but you have a new neural pathway.

So it turns out that all the parameters for our perspective are relational parameters. The relationship is the context in which you get wounded in childhood. Relationship is the context in which you get healed in a committed partnership and we think couplehood is the most powerful source of healing there is, but it’s relational rather than intrapsychic healing. So that’s what we mean by, by relationality.

HEALING THE RUPTURE

Hendrix: Now just to put it in a larger context for a minute, over the past 20 years, we have become aware and begun to language that the paradigm of the individual is now being included in—not erased but included in and expanded by the paradigm of relationality. In other words, we’re going through not just a preference of a change of techniques, but we’re going through a shift at the paradigm level,

which means the world view is changing about what an individual is, who we are as human beings.

And that world view then--put in a nutshell--is that in the individual paradigm, rooted in the Newtonian physics, we are a bunch of balls banging into each other with not too many windows. So you have to construct relationships. And the new paradigm, which is rooted in a new cosmology supported by, basically by quantum theory, the whole paradigm is beginning to be languaged as the cosmos is interconnected, that universe is and actually, a tapestry in which everything is intricately woven together.

So that you don't have to construct a relationship, you appear in a relationship. What you have to do is, in some sense, become aware of that, that you are already in relationship and you lose that sense of being in relationship when the primary relationships like in childhood with the parents get ruptured through inadequate parenting. You get wounded, you become pain, you become self-absorbed, you begin to feel separate, isolated and alone. But that's the illusion that comes with pain, with self-absorption produced by pain. When you...

Wyatt: Slow down on that. Slow down on that. Let's focus. Self-absorption... Say that one again: self-absorption caused by pain.

Hendrix: When you are, when you experience pain, let's saying you're walking on the beach and you're headed to the ocean and you've got a happy day in your mind. Stub your toe. What happens? What's left is you've got a toe. You have no ocean. You have no sand. You have no sun. You just have a toe. And that's the focus. When the pain goes away, you go back to the ocean, but for that moment, you are a hurt toe.

Well, now think in childhood, ineffective parents stubs the child's toe every day, many times a day over several years, so that fundamentally being deflected—not being held, being intruded upon, being neglected, whatever happens in childhood, happens as a pattern. Parents do it all day long, every day for many years. So the child's ruptured, so the child's connection to the parent gets ruptured. When that happens, the child's experience of being connected to the whole cosmos is ruptured. And so then that becomes the yearning of

childhood that becomes the yearning of adulthood. That's why people fall in love, is that they, you know, want to recreate a situation in which they can re-experience connection.

So the self-absorption produces a sense of being isolated, separated and what we're saying is that that's an illusion. What is really the case is you cannot not be connected, but you can lose your awareness that you're connected, and most of us have lost our awareness that we're connected and what we're trying to do is restore that awareness because that's our natural state: to be connected, to feel connected and the.... Helen and I call it that you feel, when you're connected, experiencing your connection to the whole, the quality of that is joyful aliveness. And if you're not feeling joyfully alive, something has ruptured your connectivity and so you, and you want it back. You.... All of us want that rupture to go away because it's painful and we want to feel peace. You know, you can do meditation to get peace. You take pills to get peace. You try to have a peaceful relationship. You want conflict to go away. The peaceful state seems to be built into our genes since that's what, that's what we look for. We're saying that's what we are and when we're not that, something has ruptured that peaceful state and we call it the rupture, a connectional rupture. Am I making sense now? Okay.

Wyatt: Yes, you're making a lot of sense. I want to ask.... It's the way it is.

Hendrix: That's what I'm saying. We're already connected.

Wyatt: When we, we're already connected, we're already connected. We feel disconnected. We need to re—become re-aware of how we can be connected better.

Hendrix: That's right.

Wyatt: What does that mean when a couple comes to see you for counseling, for therapy?

Hendrix: Well, what.... In terms of how does all this background thought and theory affect what I do and how I look at a couple?

Wyatt: Versus another couple's therapist who didn't know these things, who didn't understand, who didn't have this viewpoint.

Hendrix: Well, for me, when a couple comes, I have a, I do operate out of an assumptive system, which is that connection is fundamental. The rupture of connection is, apparently, universal, since we haven't found much of an exception to ruptured connection. That the couple is in my office because they have married with the unconscious hope that their relationship would repair the childhood connective rupture, but since they married somebody who is similar to the caretakers with whom the rupture occurred, which everybody does-- If you fall in love, you'll always fall in love with somebody who carries in their personalities behaviors and traits that will activate your unresolved childhood issues with your parents.

Wyatt: So there's no use in trying to avoid it. It's going to happen?

Hendrix: It's just going to happen. The only way you can avoid it is not to ever marry anybody that you like.

Wyatt: That sounds like fun.

Hendrix: Or never marry somebody that you're attracted to. Maybe it's somebody who's pleasant, handsome, beautiful, wealthy and so forth.

Wyatt: A good friend.

Hendrix: A good friend. But not somebody that charges up your.... Because that charge, which is the romantic attraction, that charge is rooted in an unconscious perception that the person that I'm looking at right now mirrors an internalized picture that I have of my caretakers and that they have in them the traits that my caretakers had, which resulted in my being, having a ruptured connection with my caretakers. And I'm attracted to that person, and that energy, because that attraction is fed by an unconscious expectation that, "I'm going to now get from you what I didn't get from them from whom it should have come, but I have to get it from you because you're like them from whom it should have come, and my unconscious will not take a substitute." You know, if you weren't, if you...weren't, have the potential of being detached and cold, I would be totally uninterested in you because I want what I want from a person who's detached and cold. Namely, the repetition is in the service of repairing that

repetition not some other situation that didn't happen.

So when a couple sits down, I've been through this now for 25 years and the scenario... I know that they showed up in my office because childhood connection occurred, rupture occurred, the rupture has repeated itself in their marriage. Although they tried to resolve it, but they did it with behaviors that they developed as defenses in childhood with their parents. Those behaviors are now brought to the adult relationship, and they're using those behaviors which are rupturing behaviors, disconnectional behaviors to try to establish connection, and of course, it's failed. And now they've run out of skills. They've run out of knowledge, and maybe they've run out of hope.

John Gottman says, "Anybody who shows up in your office has been in trouble for six years." So I haven't done that research, but that makes sense to me because you always look back and say, "How long have you been in this situation?"

Wyatt: Quite awhile.

THE IMAGO DIALOGUE PROCESS

Hendrix: So that's what I know has been going on, how, how the connection is ruptured, so—how the connection has been ruptured—and I know they're there because they believe that I can help them restore connection. And I know they also think that the reason the connection has been ruptured is because of the partner and that I will help George become more expressive, emotional, caring and so forth with Mary or I will help Mary become less intrusive or whatever with George.

So I know they're going to tell me this story, so I don't ever ask what the story is, because I already know what the story is. What I do is ask them to, when they face each other, and I help them to engage in a, what we call the Imago Dialogue Process in which, which you begin to talk and then I'll begin to direct them into a series of exchanges that will help them begin to relax their defenses with each other, begin to share with each other at a vulnerable level, and in that process, they begin then to process their relationship. But I'm not, don't care what they process. I'm just interested in how they process it.

Wyatt: Can you give a characteristic example of how that might look?

Hendrix: Well, yes, depending on what my intuition says about what this couple can talk about, I'll direct them in a number of questions. But one of the ones that, what I usually try to do in the first thing is to get them to talk about something other than why they came to see me. Because I know why, and I know if they talk about it they're going to go into their anger and so forth, and I don't want them to experience in my presence what they can do by themselves outside of my office. So I don't allow them to go into their, into their relationship.

Wyatt: And that's different from some other couples' therapists, like Gottman, Wile, who want them to get into the conflict.

Hendrix: I won't allow it.

Wyatt: Okay. How come?

Hendrix: Well, if I allow it, then I condone it, and I want my office to be the place, which replicates the safety of the childhood home they did not have. So when they come and sit.... Now, they'll get into it, but I'll interrupt it.

Wyatt: Okay. Okay, well then....

Hendrix: In fact, I even asked one man one time to say, "This is a law in my office: you cannot yell at your wife. And if you don't stop now, you can go to the door, but you have to take your wife with you because I only see couples and this is the end of the therapy."

And he said, "You're serious?"

And I said, "Absolutely serious. So if you want to stay in my office, you sit down and you do what I say."

Wyatt: Well, like my mother used to say, "You don't go into other peoples' homes and start messing it up and you shouldn't do it in your own house."

Hendrix: No. This is my office. This, this is my office. And then he said to me afterwards, he said, "You know, you're the first person who's ever put a boundary around my anger, and I want you to know that I appreciate that. And I didn't actually know I could stop my anger."

I said, “Okay. Thank you. I’m glad about that. So now we know what to—”

Wyatt: There’s a place, there’s a place for the law.

Hendrix: There’s a place for the law. And so then we go back to the process. And so, “Okay, now would you mirror your partner?” Then he, you know, he goes through that mirroring and does that. But what I start off with is, “Would you, George, or would you, Mary, tell”— it could be any number of questions—“what was it like for you to be a child in your family? Tell Mary about what that was like.”

“Oh, well. Why do I want to drag my childhood?”

“Just tell her. It’s important to know what you brought to the marriage, and you each brought some childhood fears and vulnerabilities and pains and so forth. So, blah blah blah. Would you do that?”

“Well, my childhood was...”

So I say, “Now, Mary, would you mirror that back?”

Or I might say, “You know, I have a feeling that, as I’m just sitting here in the first few minutes, is that I have a feeling what would really help your relationship is if you had a, if you had a plan because I’m feeling chaos in the room.” Because they have no direction whatsoever. “So would you tell Mary what, what the marriage would look like if it were just right?”

And so if he says, “Well, it wouldn’t have you yelling at me,” I’d say,

“No, no, no. What would it look like if it were just right?”

So, “You would talk to me in a kind tone of voice, and you would speak to me and look at me in the eye.”

So I’d begin to pull them into the possibilities. You know, both, on the one hand, understanding and empathy if we go to childhood and into possibilities if we go to the future. And what I’m trying to do is help them make connection to those aspects of their relationship that are not in conflict, because I know that 90 percent of their relationship— at least 80, even in the worst couples—at least 80 is fine, it’s the 20 percent that’s bad. And then the really healthy couples who don’t need

a whole lot of therapy, 10 percent of their relationship needs some attention.

Wyatt: Right, a small difference.

Hendrix: And if we focus on that 10 percent, then it's going to enlarge into the 90 or the 100 percent, because whatever you focus on and put energy into enlarges. It took me many years to understand that the focus on pathology in the therapeutic process amplifies the pathology. So what we're want to do is—and this is why I think solution-oriented people came along and said, "Hey, let's quit doing that," and they were pretty conscious of that back....

So there are lots of ways that we are beginning to understand the artistry of this time with other people has certain science and skill to it, and it's not just let people be themselves in front of you. What they're being is their neurotic, pathological selves and you'll say, "Well, now, let's see. How did you become that way?" Or, "How can we intervene with that?" Or, "Is there something you could do different?"

Hendrix: Of course there's something you're going to do different. We know how you became that. I'm here to help you have the relationship of your dreams, and when you're sitting with me, I want to help you dream that relationship. I'm not going to impose a dream on you. I know some things it better have in it or it won't work. That is, you have to have in it kindness and you have to have a dialogical process. You have to have a way of talking to each other that creates safety and creates connection. And because you've been doing parallel monologue for all your life. Everybody does parallel monologue. The whole culture is addicted to parallel....

Wyatt: Talking to themselves in the mirror, you mean? Or....

Hendrix: No, talking with nobody listening. I talk, you talk, I talk, you talk. Nobody says, "So let's see what's going on with you? Yeah, I can see that. Gosh." You know, you really have to be serious about a relationship to back off and say to your friend, to your wife, to your child, to your dog, you know, "Let's see what's, what's happening inside of you?"

Wyatt: A lot of people are in a relationship, marriage or otherwise,

but somehow they're saying, "I don't want to really try to be in the relationship. It should either work or... automatically. It shouldn't be too much work."

Hendrix: Well, there is an unconscious but widespread, shall we call it, belief or assumption that relationships that you have to work on are not good relationships. And I've been looking at that for a long time and inquiring about it and looking inside myself. I dislike the fact that I have to work on my relationship. It's like I sometimes say to Helen, "Look, we are relationship therapists and we are, developed this system and thousands of couples have been helped by our work. Why do we have to work on the relationship?" And the answer is, as she said to me, "You have to do what you say. You have to walk your talk. You have to internalize that."

And we've been, went through a struggle in which I was really resisting working on it, and finally we said, you know, "We have a system that works for thousands of people. Why don't we try it?" We did, and we have the relationship of our dreams. It's something to die for, and it actually works if you listen to your partner and become aware that they're not you and you respect them in their private world and their idiosyncratic world and not ask them not to have that, because "you can't have that and live with me." You know, "gosh, that's curious. That's interesting." You know, think like that. So this thing has to happen.

Wyatt: So you had the same thing. You had that, if you want to call it resistance or hesitation or....

Hendrix: Yeah, absolutely. And I know now where it comes from.

Wyatt: Where?

Hendrix: Well, in childhood, there is no expectation that you have to do anything to get the breast that you have to do anything to get the parents to respond. The whole psycho-neural system is set up to have a frustration and a response. And you don't have to say, "Can we learn dialogue, Mom?" And, "Could I tell you what I'm feeling right now about my hunger?" And you know, and this stuff in....

Wyatt: It just happens. Or doesn't.

Hendrix: Well, that's a very deeply embedded neural pattern. Now when you get married and you fall in love, you always fall in love with somebody—And the Imago is the inner picture of the caretakers. So you fall in love with somebody who mirrors not “caretakers” but your caretakers from whom you should have gotten your stuff. And so now I'm married to you and you add kindness, caring, love, depression, withdrawal, anger and you, sometimes when you talk to me you're not present. Well, those things are what's going to interest me because that's where I didn't get my needs met, that's where the connection was ruptured.

Wyatt: That's your juice.

Hendrix: That's the juice. So I want kind—I want you to be present from a person who's not present. You get what I mean. You want all the negatives to be positives. Well, my unconscious old brain, the part of me that's trapped in time, you know, because the, that part of the brain, they call it the lower brain, the one down here, does not have linear time. It lives in the eternal now. So when I unconsciously—“unconscious” is a big word—pick somebody similar to my caretakers and fall in love with them, the expectation of need satisfaction simply as a result of the emission of a distress signal, “Ah!” is going to the.... I don't have to do anything. I just have to go, “Ah! I want something—I want you to be home on time, I want you to make love to me, I want us to take a walk, I want you to always be kind to me.”

“Well, what about you?”

“Well, what about me? What about me? Is this about, you always say ‘what about, what about you?’ when I'm talking about you! I want you to do this.”

“I don't have any sense of how I have to change.” Everybody who comes to my office comes with that historical pattern, and so what I have to do is say, “You know what. Both of you came here with that, and so we both have to engage in a process that enables you to discharge that illusion. And that is, you have to become for Mary the parent she didn't have, and then you will give her the touching, the holding--” That's why therapists can't do this, because you know, that part of you, that primitive needs stuff that you get sued for if you do

it. "So you need touching, holding, massages, kindness, all kinds of... And you need to do it all the time and, you know, every day just like a parent would."

"And you, Mary, need to become the parent George didn't have. And so we have to figure out, what was missing, George, in your parenting? And you don't have to become just some parent that you think that George ought to have. You have to become the parent George didn't have which he now wants."

Now so he wants somebody who gives him some space. He wants somebody, you know, there's intrusiveness and neglect are the two primary wounding patterns. So George may have been wounded by an intrusive mother, so he wants some privacy. He'd like to have it guilt-free. He'd like to actually play golf on Saturday without having to explain it to you. And then, of course, he also wants some connection, and he wants it in this particular way and you want blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

So you have to stretch into these patterns that are strange.

Wyatt: Right. That makes... "Stretch" I'm fine with. I guess I had a concern when you said they have to become the parent the person wanted because we know that the person the parent wanted is probably unrealistic to some extent. And we can't be chameleons. We can't be all things to all people. But then you said, "Stretch."

Hendrix: Stretch. Right.

Wyatt: And we get that extra 10 percent.

Hendrix: That's right. That's right.

Wyatt: But I don't have to be everything.

Hendrix: No.

Wyatt: But enough. Good enough.

Hendrix: And every couple thinks that when we start on this process... Okay. Healing and growth are two things. Healing is not growth; growth is not healing. Healing is getting what you needed, and growing is recovering what you lost in childhood. Of capacities that you lost. So, let's see. One of the capacities that I lost in childhood

was access to my feelings. I grew up on a farm. You can't have feelings on a farm. You've got to go out and plow. You know, you've got to go do the work. So, so what if you're feeling bad? You know. It's going to rain in two hours and the peanuts are going to rot, so you've got to, you've got to go do that. So you put the feelings aside.

Who do I marry? I marry somebody who's full of affect. She wants a partner. So she says....

Wyatt: "Come on."

Hendrix: "Come on." And it's like, "well, that's not me." Well, it is me; it's the me I don't yet have but it's my potential me. It's the me that got put in a box because....

Wyatt: That got left behind. Yeah.

Hendrix: ...I had to go plow. So she says, she calls on me to be the me that I would be if I were not wounded. And if I grow that part of me and say, "Okay, well, let me work on my feelings." And then she has to help me do that, to work on my feelings, and after awhile I'm beginning to say, you know, "I'm feeling, I'm feeling angry right now, and I'm feeling really mad and then I'm feeling guilty" and I begin to language it, and after awhile, my languaging begins to do something to my chemistry, and I begin to feel it. I've become a, I've become a feeling person. Now she has a playmate. We can both do feeling stuff, and then she's going to have something that I want from her that she can't give me because her parents didn't help her develop that in her childhood. So we stretch and grow into this.

GETTING SMART IN RELATIONSHIPS

Hendrix: But the thing--everybody gets overwhelmed by it--but the thing we say--and this is the thing that makes it always work--she says, "I want you to be available to me all the time." She doesn't mean that.

Wyatt: Right. Okay.

Hendrix: So we say, "Okay. So what would he have to do and how frequently and for how long for you to feel that he was available all the time?"

“Oh, well...” We call it SMART. It would have to be specific: “Call me. Call me...”

Wyatt: “Call me once a day when you’re at work.”

Hendrix: ...once a day.”

“For how long?”

“Oh, gosh. Only two minutes because I don’t want to talk long. I just want to touch base with you. And better still, call me. Call me. That’s what I want. I want you to reach out to me.”

“Oh, I can’t do that.”

Just for two minutes. Any, any corporate executive, even the president, anybody, can make a two minute phone call during the day.

Once he knows she doesn’t want to talk to him all day long, she just wants a two-minute phone call at lunch or between a meeting, and he says, “Oh, I can do that.” Then he’s not overwhelmed any more. He doesn’t have to be a person who has to give up his job. He just has to be a person who finds time for a two minute phone call. Maybe twice a day.

Wyatt: I had a guy who had an email reminder to remind him of something.

Hendrix: Email popup reminder. Something—And it’s all symbolic. It means I’m in your mind. You care about me. You remembered. That’s the childhood repair process. You know, the parents are there. They’re in the background.

And so that begins to happen, and then he feels empowered by that.

My god, he comes home and she’s so happy and she’s glad to see him. And she hugs him, cooks him a good dinner, says, “Can we make love?”

“Just because I called you?”

“Well, no...” But that was the trigger that said, ‘I’m safe with you. I’m cared about by you.’”

Wyatt: It seems that relationships go one way or the other. In a negative momentum or a positive momentum.

Hendrix: Yeah. Right. They do.

Wyatt: And getting that positive flow changes everything.

Hendrix: It changes everything. It changes the chemistry, because you begin to move into.... Well, when it's really high, it's dopamine, and when it's sort of a glow, they call it endorphins. But when it drops below that, it becomes cortisol. And when you go into the cortisol, the contamination of the bloodstream, you're agitated and angry, and you're paranoid and that's not good. And it will go there if you get scared, and you get scared because your partner does something that triggers an unfinished childhood deal where you get hurt with that stuff.

So your partner has to learn how to be safe for you. I have to learn how to be safe for my partner. And it's not really hard to learn. It's like surrender negative stuff. You know, when you want something say, "Hey, you know, I would like to make love twice a week," instead of, "We never make love. You're not interested in sex."

You know, if I say, "And that would really be meaningful to me. And could we work it out? Do we need to have a schedule? Could we maybe go to bed at 9:00 Tuesday and Saturday? Or maybe just on the weekend." That's going to interest somebody unless they have severe sexual traumas resulting from childhood rape, they're going to feel like, "God, this guy cares about me." He said, you know, "Could we go to dinner or could we do something, maybe have massages?"

Wyatt: What gets you in the mood.

Hendrix: "What gets you in the mood?" And you become, I call it, you become partners in the couplehood. You co-create the relationship that you both want. And it's different, so it has to.... You can't have this or this. What really happens in partnership marriages is you have neither one. You both co-create a relationship that incorporates the distinctive features of each into a new thing. We call that a conscious marriage. Now we have the marriage of our dreams. It's not going to just show up because we designed it. Now, but we know what to actualize: this marriage needs more time, so we've going to have more vacations. This marriage needs more sex, so we've got to,

you know, plan how we're going to do that. This marriage needs more laughter, so we're going to—Or it needs more whatever. The relation—

Wyatt: Does it ever happen when the relationship—I'm sure it does; it's a loaded question—the relationship has improved. Communication is better. Both of them feel like it's on a better momentum path...

Hendrix: Yes.

Wyatt: ...but one person's still withdrawn sexually. The other person feels left out by that, so it could return to this negative pattern again.

Hendrix: It could.

Wyatt: What happens then? They were doing a lot better, but the sex isn't happening and to one person, that's not an option.

Hendrix: Well, I think that there's a, in Baptist theology, we call it backsliding.

Hendrix: Well, I just think that's a universal thing, that what happens in therapy is that people, you know, develop these patterns and they make it better and then they say, "Okay, we got it," and then they go home and quit. So what we do with Imago is say, "We're available..." In fact, I said—I don't have a practice anymore but when I had a practice, I would say, "I will always be your therapist if you want me. I will always be available. I hope you never make a phone call to me again, but if you find yourself slipping, I want you to call me and you will come in and we'll have an hour, two hours or 10 hours."

"But the most important thing for me to say to you is, what you've learned to do in my office every week, you now continue to do in your relationship every day."

Now, that will work, but here's the fascinating thing that happened. We wrote a book called Receiving Love to deal with this.

RECEIVING THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT

Hendrix: At a certain point in the healing process, you cross a line into receiving the forbidden fruit. So what got clear to us is that some couples don't progress at the rate they should progress if some hidden

variable wasn't there, which is their defense against love. Or to put it more prosaically, their defense against receiving. Some part of them can't take in, and the reason we've found is that if you didn't get it in childhood and your parents loaded it with, "you shouldn't have it. You don't deserve it. You'll never find a loving person in your life," or "you'll always be irresponsible or whatever," and you're with this partner and....

Like the most classic example was when one partner I was working with, and all she wanted was a simple thank-you for cooking dinner, and he said, "Why should I do that? Because that's your role in our marriage. You shouldn't be thanked for doing what you're supposed to do."

So we know what kind of family he grew up in, but he finally understood that in her childhood, she was never valued for anything she did, and she needed to be acknowledged, recognized and appreciated for her contribution to the marriage, especially around dinner. Because she, it was a special deal: he liked food. She did special deals around food. He would, but he wasn't supposed to say "thank you." So he finally got it; he finally said "thank you," and they--this was in my office, the first time--and I was--I had seen this for many years, but I had just assumed there was, something was wrong in the transition or something. So I said, "What happened? I saw your face go flat and you looked white and you started to breathe, like that."

She says, "Well, I felt panic." Because he had done it exactly right. He had said "thank you" just the way she wanted to hear it, so we went into that, through a kind of regressive process that we do and found out that there's a voice in her head that says "you're not worth loving and if you ever get love, don't trust the man giving it to you because he doesn't mean it." Well then, and what she said consciously was, "You just did that because we're in the office and Harville trained you to do it." You see the parallel between the unconscious message.

So we have a defense. If she lets in the caring that he now offered, her mother will withdraw from her, the mother inside the psychic space will be devoid of the--at that time, the only mother she had, the mother would go away, and she went on and said, "My mother will leave the room. She will never come back, and I will die. So to get this

means I will die.”

So we have to, at some point, you have to go, you either stay in therapy until you get to that boundary, or when you hit it after you’ve made some progress, you come back and then you have to look at the, what we call the defense against receptivity.

Wyatt: Okay. That sounds like, worth a book.

Hendrix: And that’s worth the book—and it’s a really tough piece in therapy because you have to face your own unconscious self-hatred, the hatred of your own wishes, the rejection of your own impulses and all that’s unconscious. You don’t even know that you’re doing all that. You just know that some part of you hates that part of you that wants what you wanted from childhood, which your parents said was bad to want. You still want it. You ask for it. Your husband or wife gives it to you. You can’t take it because it’s forbidden fruit.

Wyatt: So that takes some time.

Hendrix: That takes some time, yes.

Wyatt: I’ve heard you speak of different time lines for how long it takes people to get better.

Hendrix: Yeah.

Wyatt: Can you give a brief overview of that?

Hendrix: Well, my experience has been that there are four types of couples. Just to organize them, I call them Type 1, 2, 3 and 4 instead of giving them names. And types 1 and 2 and the, and they are wounded progressively, types 1, very badly. Bad childhood. Types 4, mm, difficult childhood, but they can learn cognitively that they can process information. They can change behaviors by being guided, helped, instructed. Ones and Two can’t process information. They can’t internalize knowledge. They have to go through a reparative process with the therapist and with their partner for probably... It ranges. I would say, usually when I get a 1 or 2 couple, I think, well, I’ve got a year for them to develop a working alliance with me.

Wyatt: Basics.

Hendrix: To be safe enough with me in order to actually carry out

something outside. Now, I do dialogue with them for the year and I do all the skills so that they can begin internalizing this, but you know, they, they need me to do it. They can hardly do it themselves outside, and they're cured when they can do it at home, but...

So that is a, that is a three-year period at least. Minimum three years. These other couples, the 3s and 4s are six to nine months, because they basically need to be held. They need some education. They need some practice in skills, and they need some assurance.

It's like the people who have read *Getting the Love You Want* and written me, called me or saw me on the street or somewhere and said, "Thank you for saving my marriage."

Wyatt: Right. From the book.

Hendrix: And I said, "Tell me how I did that."

And they said, "Well, we bought the book. We read it, and we did the 10 exercises."

Wyatt: They ran with it, yeah.

Hendrix: They ran with it and they said, "That was 10 years ago. We got it. We were wounded because of our childhood. We need to learn dialogue, so we began to pay attention to our vulnerabilities, did dialogue. We have a great marriage. Thank you very much."

Wyatt: So it's what my mentor called a...

Hendrix: "It cost me \$14."

Wyatt: ... a "ripe plum."

Hendrix: A ripe plum.

Wyatt: You take it right, but it's wrong when the theory is based on right plums. Some pop psychology couples books promise everybody can be healed by reading the book.

Hendrix: Oh, yes. Right. No. In fact, that's one of the worries I had when I put those exercises in the book. I told the publisher, "If I do that, people will do the exercises and not come to therapy anymore."

So they said, "Well, you talk to some colleagues about that."

And one of the colleagues said, “The couples who can do these exercises are going to do them, and all the ones who can’t are going to show up in your office.” And that’s what, that’s what has happened. And then you put the little stuff in there: “If you find you can’t go through with this, then call a therapist, and blah, blah, blah.”

WHAT HENDRIX LEARNED FROM HIS MARRIAGE

Wyatt: How did your marriage influence your theory? Because you know, I’ve heard that you had trouble in your marriage. You were public about that. You wrote about it. Did that change your theory at that time when you and your wife were having trouble? Did that change how you were thinking about things?

Hendrix: Well, that particular experience, I think what it changed was an understanding of the, of the healing process. And I’m almost embarrassed to say this, but—and my wife is the author of this insight. That, she calls it the, that it’s an epistemological, therapy is an epistemological process. It’s a way of knowing. There are two ways of knowing: separate knowing and connected knowing. Separate knowing is when you kind of know things and...

Wyatt: In your head.

Hendrix: My cognitive process. And I’m a separate knower, and I assume that what I knew was internalized in my behavior, even though my wife felt that was untrue. She’s a, she’s a connected knower, so she internalizes it but there’s enough of separate knower in her that she also, we both participated in the defense, that knowledge was enough and that, and that we were actually—It was an illusion that we were in. It’s like we look back at it, and we were really crazy.

Wyatt: You were smart enough.

Hendrix: Yeah, we were smart enough to do this. But we weren’t doing it, so. So I think what we learned was enactment, that you have to translate cognition into experience.

And I think the other thing we learned was--this is where we shifted experientially to relational healing, and the way we got there was a very pragmatic and practical thing occurred, which was that we

said, you know, we need to eliminate all negative transactions in our relationship. Because, you know, we're both analytical. We could both size you up and say, "It's because of..." And you know, I can see your unconscious defenses occurring. Helen can do mine and... So we were essentially abusing each other analytically, which is, I think, often what analysis is.

Wyatt: Sarcasm or....

Hendrix: Yeah. And so we said, "Okay. We have to do that." It's interesting, we were plundering through a book store one time and we saw this big astrological book called Relationship Astrology and we just pulled it off the shelf as a lark because neither of us are into astrology.

Wyatt: "Why not?"

Hendrix: We looked at it and it had a way, and it was for couples. So we finally found our little place in the book, this couple, marriage this guy, marriage to this guy and it was pretty interestingly accurate. It said that these two people are addicted to negativity. I said, "We were just talking about that word. Is this another sign? Is this a sign from the universe that we're on track now?"

So what we did was we, we went cold turkey.

Wyatt: Take wisdom where you can get it.

Hendrix: Take wisdom where you can get it. If it shows up in astrology, take it.

And so we went cold turkey and we began to shut down. You know, NA negativity. And we said, "We can make a request for what we want around what we're frustrated about, but we can't criticize each other for the...."

Wyatt: No finger wagging.

Hendrix: No finger wagging: "You didn't do this; why don't you do that? That was awful of you." I can ask, "Would you do so and so and so and so."

Hendrix: The behavior change request process, something we developed and used for thousands of couples. Well, it took us about

three months just.... I mean, it got worse because it was like, it was like an addiction and trying to get off of negativity. We craved it. And it got really dramatic for three months.

Wyatt: Prohibition....

Hendrix: Increases desire. Yes. So, and then after about three months of committing and staying with it, and we gave ourselves a little room, which was "if I, if I do collapse into a negative description of you, I will then tell you five ways that that description is true of me." And the aversive quality of that began to undermine the motivation to be... And it undercut the sort of spontaneous, automatic negativity.

So after about three months, we got control of that and then for six months it stabilized, and then the next three months it was fantastic. We realized we'd crossed the bridge and we had stabilized it. Then we decided we would remarry. Had a big party and 250 people show up because we...

Wyatt: Congratulations.

Hendrix: Because we had it. There was the, January 1st or New Year's Eve of 2000 that we did this.

What we learned from this is that when we shifted... You know, there are always lapses, you know, little ones.

Wyatt: Of course. Of course.

Hendrix: Right now, we can get out of it in five minutes. We used to take three weeks or two months to get out of it. But there's a little lapse.

Wyatt: There are many turns in the river; they don't all go straight.

Hendrix: That's right. And when that little lapse occurs, I feel the same stuff I felt as a child and I felt when the relationship was terrible. And then so we repair that and we make this relation space safe, I don't have those experiences. And I said, "You know, this is not according to theory. Theory is you get healed inside and then you're not vulnerable to the stimulus, but here we are now having done this so long—I've had 12 years of psychotherapy, in which I worked on my mother, worked on you, worked on everything, and then we've

done this work for now two years, and if you invade my space in that particular way, I feel this feeling. So according to psycho-neurology, that neural pathway is still active, and, but now I've got this other one because I notice that I react, but then I can go over here and do something different. But I still feel that."

So the basic is that we move into the understanding of relational healing, that healing is relational. You heal the relationship, meaning that you change the environment within which you live to one that's safe. And to do that, you have to never threaten the amygdala with negativity, because when you do, the amygdala will send the signals to the brain that, "I'm in a dangerous space. Run up the defenses." Yeah.

Wyatt: I've learned myself, that that's the time to go in the cave.

Hendrix: Yes. Right. Yes. Calm down the beast and get it quiet because you're going to, you're going to rupture more stuff.

Wyatt: And then it's hard to repair that.

Hendrix: Yeah, right. It's like, when people come to therapy, you asked me what I do when they sit down, is that I know they're bringing me their childhood wound and all the years of their re-wounding. So if they'd come in the first year of their marriage, we'd only had to deal mainly with what they brought to their marriage from childhood, but now that it's seven years later, they've got seven years of repeating the childhood wound, so it's like you're talking about. It's, and they, but they've been trying to make it work. The power struggle is all about trying to get healed. But you know, it results in more and more rupturing of the connection.

It's a growth... I finally called it, the power struggle is growth trying to happen but without, without skills it doesn't happen. But that's what's trying to happen. That's why...

Wyatt: Without, without skills and support and safety.

Hendrix: Yes, skills, support and safety. So when they come, they want to get well. I've never, nobody's ever come to my office and wanted a divorce, even if they had the divorce papers in hand. It was just that they'd failed.

Wyatt: They failed, yeah.

Hendrix: So there's something there, and so when you can, you can reach in and say, "I can relate to that desire in you to have this relationship, and I'm not going to let you talk about all the failures. We're going to talk about that desire. What is it you really want? What's the dream marriage?" Begin, then, to reactivate. Then I give them skills, about which, hey, they can have an hour and a half in my office without a fight. Never had that in their marriage. Then I say, "Dialogue when you go home, 30 minutes a day. Sit down and talk about X." Then they learn they can transport the skill outside. After awhile, the safety of the office becomes the safety of the relationship.

WORKING IN A RELATIONAL PARADIGM

Wyatt: I want to ask you about common mistakes you see therapists making when you're training therapists. You and your wife are training or other Imago therapists training therapists, what are mistakes that you see therapists making that hearing this tape, they can say, "Huh," and they could easily work on that.

Hendrix: Well, the major mistake that therapists make that we train, because we train therapists who are not trained in the relational paradigm.

Wyatt: Of course, yeah.

Hendrix: They come to us and then we say, "Hey, we're in a new paradigm." And the identity of the therapist in the individual paradigm is the therapist is an expert, and so I have to be a good interpreter or I have to do strategic interventions. I have to be clever. I have to do all kinds of things, and there and there are wonderful therapeutic procedures, but in couple's relationship, especially Imago couples therapy, you are a facilitator of a healing process that occurs between the partners in this relationship. So the biggest mistake that we see is that they can't stay out of the couple's space. They want to go in and have a one-to-one relationship with one of the partners in the presence of the other partner, not knowing that when you do that, then you recreate this partner's childhood background in which they were ignored, you know, or not noticed when they were in the space.

So we want to keep them in that space.

So I think that's the biggest mistake, is that they do that. And that they— within Imago therapy, and that's the only place now I know where therapists make mistakes, is that they try to become healer. They try to become all things to all people and do not understand that they are a facilitator of a process that is outside of them. And I think that once we get them to understand that, "Hey, you're supposed to create a space within which this couple can find each other, and then provide them expert help to do that, monitoring each transaction so that if any disconnectional things are said that they are connected—they are replaced with connectional statements so the couple can learn."

And the other piece of that is that Imago therapists who don't quite get it that dialogue is not the healing process. Dialogue is the process that creates the structure within which the healing occurs and they often feel that if they get people to mirror, validate and be empathic that they have them in the therapeutic process.

Wyatt: If they say the right words.

Hendrix: They say the right words, and so they're mechanical. And so we have that thing: they start off as mechanics and then after awhile they get it, and they become crafts-persons, and then after awhile, they get it and then they become artists. And when they're artists, you don't even know they're doing Imago therapy because it's a silent skill that, you know, the great artists you don't know that they actually know how to mix paint.

Wyatt: So those that are trained to know their couples' methods can work with your ideas as well. They seem pretty similar. I haven't been trained in your model, and I've been trained by different people and developed my own style, and the things you're talking about are the things that seem to work when I do it, even though I haven't been trained in your model.

Hendrix: You've not been trained in it. So it makes sense to you that, what we're doing. Yeah. And I think therapists working in other models who stay in the--either consciously or unconsciously--in the individual paradigm, try to help George, you know, manage his anger,

Mary manage her shaming stuff and deal with his relationship with his father and her with her father. Then they'll come together and that's going to make the relationship better. And I think we do the reverse of that. We think we have to restructure the relational space without paying a lot of attention to you getting well so you can have a better relationship. You get the relationship well and it will make you well.

Wyatt: Thank you very much for coming today, and having this conversation.

Hendrix: I appreciate your insightful questions and your comments, as well.

Wyatt: Well, it's good getting to know you.

Hendrix: Thank you.

Wyatt: All right.

Bonus Outtakes

THE FUTURE OF PARENTING

Wyatt: But in childhood—I think I know the answer, but I’ll ask—there’s no way to have a perfect upbringing, right?

Hendrix: I would agree, I would agree with that. Let me just make a comment. I think that children have been objects for parents for millions of years and that in the past 25 years, we’ve learned more about what a child needs—

Wyatt: So I don’t think you’re saying that you can have perfect upbringing, that kids won’t have any suffering or disengagement during childhood.

Hendrix: I think, yeah, I am saying that, and I’m saying that with the context that for thousands of years, parenting has been abusive to children and it’s abusive—What I mean by abuse is not that kids have gotten beaten up, although for thousands of years they were beaten up and put in foundling homes and sent off to be socialized by other parents. Up until the nineteenth century this was still going on in England, going on in France, going on in Germany.

So what we have is a modern world which is peopled by children whose parents were basically objects and so that sense of objectification of children, you know, the, the only, the.... Children have less rights in America than pets do.

The laws protecting children are more lax and less definitive than laws protecting animals, which means is the consciousness about what a child is and therefore what a human being is still very low. So the answer is, “Not yet.” But in the past 25 years as a result of the work that Dan Stern has done and I won’t go through all the names, but that whole field of developmental psychology.

Wyatt: Right. Attachment theory.

Hendrix: Attachment theory, object relations theory, which was a little older than that. And then the neuro physiological theories

that are coming out now with Dan Siegel, in which we are really understanding that the relationship affects brain development, brain size, cognitive functioning, emotional stability, that as an interpersonal, we are social—I was talking to Dan last night. He says, “We are, we have a social brain. We are...” And I said, “Well, we have a cosmic, cosmic nature. A social brain means we are plugged into the whole universe, right?” And he says, “Yeah.” You know, it’s the same thing: the whole has to have a point, you know, the particular is related to the whole.

So we’re beginning to understand that now, that children... Freud knew that children reactivate their wounded childhoods in their adult life, and Imago understands we reactivate our wounded childhood in our marriages trying to resolve the stuff.

So no, there’s no perfect parenting, but we’re now beginning to understand what it might look like. And the whole idea that we even are interested in that is an absolutely new concept in the history of human consciousness of our children, which means we’re making progress. Once you can have an idea about, hey, maybe socializing a child and training them up in the way that they should go and when they’re old they won’t depart from it isn’t the way to train them. Maybe we need to hold them in such a way that they evolve their own innate potential and become who they are actually are, like a plant becomes a plant and, you know, we have to help them learn boundaries so they don’t run into cars and be, you know, hurt other people. They have to learn boundaries but put them in a safe context with appropriate boundaries and they become...

But no. Someday we’ll do that. We’re not doing that now. I would say everybody on the planet has a wounded childhood. At least one.

Wyatt: Right. And I would say, along with, say, the object relation folks, Winnicott and others, that in the mistakes, in the errors that parents naturally make from being human, kids can learn from that and learn how to deal with conflict and...

Hendrix: They do.

Wyatt: But it’s much different than feeling abused or neglected or

those things.

Hendrix: Right. There's a thing that most of the relational, early relational people developed, of "optimal frustration" and now we're even questioning that. Maybe optimal frustration is another way of talking about socialization in that we really need to understand how we can hold a child and help them learn without having to go through the frustration cycle. We don't know yet.

Wyatt: What about, what about the concept of—Winnicott, again—the good enough mother, the good enough parent? Does that make sense to you or....

Hendrix: Yeah, that makes absolute sense. And that again is one of the forward-looking concepts. You know, that was, that was... Freud didn't talk much about parenting and most of the analytic tradition has talked about how parenting impacts adulthood but not much about how you should parent. And so, when the object relations people came along, they began to talk about the impact of mothering, of the relational variables on the developing child and good enough mothering was one of those forward-looking concepts, which again, addressed the question you have is there's no such thing as perfect parenting but there is such a thing as optimal frustration and good enough mothering, and if you can have both of those and some sense of balance, you produce a child who will grow up with minimal suffering. But, but I think, I think we're headed toward something, I mean, it may be 50 or 100 years before we get there, but I think we're headed toward an understanding of human beings that's going to allow us to know how to rear children without them having to remember Egypt, which is the years of suffering and slavery that...

Wyatt: We'll get to that later.

Hendrix: We'll get to that later.

HENDRIX ON SPIRITUALITY

Wyatt: Okay, now we'll go to the next step. Harville, I notice you have a PhD in theology and psychology. How did you go that track and is that still with you in some ways?

Hendrix: Well, yes. I went that track because I was ordained to the Baptist ministry at age 17 and had a full-time church all through college, the last year of high school and four years of college. Which if I hadn't had, I wouldn't have had enough money to go to college, so.

Wyatt: You had your own church?

Hendrix: Had my own church.

Wyatt: That you were head pastor of?

Hendrix: You see, a Southern Baptist does not have to have an education to be called to the ministry. You just have to have a call, and then God will tell you what to say. Which is not true but, you know, you still have to figure out, you still have to write your sermons. And you may get some inspiration, but when you're that young, you don't know what inspiration is. You just know you've got that sermon to write by next Sunday.

So it was an early, premature kind of thing that I look back on and it interrupted my adolescence but it also, it laid the foundation for my whole life.

Because I am now, in some sense, an accumulation of, of skills for speaking that I began to develop at 15, had to use every Sunday for the rest of my life and became a platform person, spokesperson.

Wyatt: So you still have some of the southern preacher in you?

Hendrix: Oh, yes. Right. But now I have a different gospel, which is that love incarnated in marriage rather than love—Not rather than, but as an instance of the love incarnated in Christ. Because I think that this concretizes what Jesus was trying to do when he becomes God, you know, on earth as the incarnation of love. Where is it incarnated? Well, you know, he came into a world in which even individuals didn't exist, so you, you know, you related to the tribal leader and he came into a world in which you related to the monotheistic god. And so it wasn't a relational model, horizontal relational. It was a vertical relational model.

And that has changed. So is it still with me? I stayed with that. I was going to be a pastor. Couldn't stand standing at the door not

remembering people's names, and you...

Wyatt: Everybody's name versus just two people.

Hendrix: Right. I knew all about your life, but I couldn't remember who you were, even if you were my deacon sometimes. So I figured I would then train ministers, so I went to seminary and graduate school to become a seminary professor and did that. But in the process of getting my theological degree, I did an internship at a mental hospital, kind of sent there by my professor who said that, "You seem a bit abstract. We think that you'd be a better teacher if you actually knew about human suffering."

I said, "Well, hell. I suffered. I lost my parents and blah, blah, blah."

He said, "Yeah, but you adapted, compensated and you're in one of, you know, you're in that, whatever the resilient child thing is. You're fine. But you don't know anything about it."

So he sent me to a mental hospital, and I became a chaplain. And after getting over my terror of that, I realized I did not know about suffering. Then he sent me to a regular hospital. He said, "Now you've got to spend six months being a chaplain for people who are physically ill, mentally ill."

So I got really interested in what, because I saw stuff that, you know, really, you couldn't answer theologically and you couldn't just say something to it and it would go away. Or pray about and it would disappear. None of the theological methods were useful. What was really useful was being present to those people and learning how to listen. And at the time, I couldn't use those phrases. I just knew there was something different here.

So I then... How I wound up in theology and psychology was that I decided that I wanted to pursue that somehow and so I became a clinical pastoral therapist, bringing those two together. And fortunately, the program at The Divinity School of the University of Chicago had that already structured where I could do my theological work and do my psychological work and the whole structure was "how do they interface?" And then I was, got more interested... I've always been interested academically. I consider myself a generative

theoretician, but I also found that I liked to operationalize things. So I think that's why, you know, I developed Imago therapy but I also have—Imago theory—but I also have an Imago therapy that if you can't operationalize the concept then the concept probably isn't useful.

So that's how the two got together. And am I still there? Do you want to be more specific about that? Am I still theological or...

Wyatt: Well, in what ways, in what ways does your Christian background play into your work and your ideas? You mentioned incarnation played out in action, and Jesus. How do those things play out in your work either overtly or covertly, indirectly, directly?

Hendrix: Well, I think that I can answer that in a kind of simple way, that I think we have great difficulty escaping from our formative processes. And that while my, quote, "Christianity," now would be languaged differently, I'm still a Christian who has found another way to language what, now as I look back on it, was a very simple and obvious spirituality, to language a spirituality that is not simple and obvious, but is in fact, deep and mysterious and, I would say that I'm at the moment.... My wife says that I'm a Christian mystic, that....Or maybe I'm just a mystic who's embeddedness in the West and in the Christian paradigm, you know, slants me toward certain thoughts or assumptions that I would not be if I were a Buddhist mystic. That, in other words, in Buddhism there's some question about whether there is in actuality a divine reality and in Christianity there's pretty much of an assumption that there, there's, the two traditions where there is one and we're participants in it or there is one and it's outside of us.

And I think I'm probably in that tradition where my experiences that we are... You know, I've moved from a vertical organization of experience to a lateral.

Wyatt: Across. The vertical, up to God; horizontal, with people through God.

Hendrix: Through God. And that somehow God came down to earth in Jesus and that that was not just a onetime historical event that God came down to earth and that the divine however we name it is not personal. Is not a person, is not a thing. You can't find it but is a

quality that pervades phenomena, including me, and is also a source that accounts for phenomena.

I mean, I really do not think as I think... It was interesting that Darwin and Newton were both devout Christians but came up with—

Wyatt: I didn't know that.

Hendrix: —random theory, that we are accidents, cosmic accidents and so forth. And at least that's, the people who came along after them pulled their theology out of it and moved us into a secular evolutionary theory. We become then, you know, evolutionary products from the beasts and cosmic accidents, this random theory, instead of there being...

I really find that I've tried to do that. I became a secular, a secular person for a long time. Discovered also that I couldn't give up my theological assumptions, and I was in, found one day I was a theologian with an empiricist methodology, which are totally incompatible. Because empiricist methodology means there's nothing but phenomena. But if you're a theologian, there's something other than phenomena or phenomena is accounted for by something outside of itself. And I found, I'm still there, that this is a mystery that is unspeakable.

I one time was looking at a picture of the inside of the eye and I began to weep. I said, "Accident? Well, yeah, I can see adaptive design. You know, the thing needed an eye, but, but why in Galapagos are there 27 different kinds of finches?"

Wyatt: I don't know.

Hendrix: And I just came to the conclusion while I was there, it was sort of mystical, God just got carried away with creativity, you know. You don't need 27 different finches, and this is a small niche. You know, and there's a little finch over here with this niche and a little over there with that niche, but the niches are....

So there's something about awe and mystery and I would think my spirituality now is more, I know nothing. I know so much less. Knowledge is gone. I can only have concepts, ideas, assumption but not certainties. And, but I'm, but I'm ecstatic, you know? I live in a

numinous universe. It's glowing, and it's mysterious, and it's big. And how could you ever say you know anything? I mean, everything you know is irrelevant next year because somebody says, "Hey, that wasn't quite right."

So you give up knowing for participation, and I think that's, I think that's what happened to Imago, was that Imago was a very structured, cognitive process and at some point, you participate in the life of the couple.

Wyatt: Well, I think of...

Hendrix: And they change.

Wyatt: I think of....

Hendrix: And you change.

Wyatt: I think of the Last Supper when Jesus said, "Let's share bread. Let's have a communion."

Hendrix: Yeah. Yes. Let's have a communion.

Wyatt: And that's what you're asking, the couples are doing in some ways.

Hendrix: Oh, absolutely. I'd never made that association yet. That's really, let's break bread together. And, you know Spock, who wrote all this stuff about children. Somebody asked him, "Can you summarize your theory in a line?"

And he said, "A word: kindness."

There's something very simple about the absolute mysterious, the mysterium tremendum. It's absolutely simple, but it's beyond words. You can only feel it. You can....

Like right now, as I allow myself to move into that space, I'm just overcome and I can just point, you know. But I can't, I can't do a word that, other than that it's mysterious.

And so I think that's where my spirituality. And I find that quite compatible with the New Testament. I mean, I think the New Testament can be read as a moralistic, legalist, rigidly structured theological thing that, you know, puts all demands on you and makes

you feel guilty and, you know, do A, B, and C and have the right words and say “Jesus” 14 times every time you say something. And Jesus wasn’t like that.

He walked around in the same awe that I think I’m experiencing of the, you know, the Father and of nature and beauty of people and was always into kindness and, you know, always into healing and always into connection, into relationship. And he didn’t have a lot of rules. He said, “Hey, it’s all, it’s all summarized here. All the law is summarized in one sentence: love the Lord your God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself. That sums it all up.”

Hendrix: And so this whole tradition of the Talmud, in which you had to have all those rules...that’s not what it’s about. And I think I finally got that, and it took me a long time to pull out of the Southern Baptist, moralistic, behavioral sort of spirituality, into participation. Maybe because I’m old enough now, too. Maybe some brain cells... Some people say that enough brain cells die, your brain goes mushy anyway and you can’t make distinctions and so mysticism is only possible for old people. I’m not sure that’s the case.

Wyatt: You no longer believe that miracles can’t happen on the Sabbath.

Hendrix: No longer believe that miracles can’t happen on the Sabbath?

Wyatt: On the Sabbath.

Hendrix: Yes, of course. I think a miracle happens every day. Every day. All the time. In fact, every time I come down out of that 37,000 foot aluminum container with a motor attached to it and walk away, that’s a miracle.

Wyatt: So brass tacks?

Hendrix: Yeah.

Wyatt: Does that ever play into your clinical work, then? I see it coming through you as we talk, when I’ve seen you on stage doing demonstrations, when I’ve seen you on videos, I see it coming through you, living it. In the clinical work, it must come through you,

obviously. I'm not asking you to sing your praises in that way, but I mean, it's in the horizontal. That's where you're at.

Hendrix: Yeah. Right. That's right.

Wyatt: Coming through in interpersonal relations. Your wife calling you to it, back to the marriage.

Hendrix: Oh, yes. Yes. Right.

Wyatt: She doesn't put up with you just being up here.

Hendrix: That's right. And still doesn't. Every time I go there, she says, "Remember me. I'm out here." Yes.

Wyatt: Right. So what about Christian marriage, then? You must see couples that are Christians, dedicated Christians, committed Christians. Do they have any unique issues or problems that you address?

Hendrix: Well, they do. And it's a tedious thing depending upon the amount of devotion they have to certain formulas and certain forms. The, one of the major concepts in Imago is symbiotic thinking, in which I'm assuming that you're assuming what I'm assuming.

Wyatt: I'm with you.

Hendrix: That "we live in the same world, and that's my world and we're one and I'm the one" kind of thing. And often I find that if the spirituality has certain, more literal characteristics to it, and more devotional and moral, that there are certain formulas that I want you to have and you to have. So it's, I have to work with them to understand that that's an instance of "I like apple pie, and you like to take walks."

Wyatt: Preference.

Hendrix: It's a preference, in that the language is an overlay of an underlying commitment that they both have to something that's beyond themselves. But their rupture in their relationship comes because they are insisting on a idiosyncratic way of looking at it, and can they surrender that? Because if they can surrender it there and meet God in the middle, in the between, then they can surrender a bunch of other symbiotic overlays that don't have anything to do with

their religion: with what kind of dog they like or where they're going to live or who's going to, you know, take out the garbage. Because if you don't understand ultimately that you live with another person, which is the most a radical thing to ever get, is you actually live with another person, not an extension of you. And they live in their world, and it's not your world, and you can never love that person until you know that person and until you don't judge that person. Most of us love illusions: we love the person we think they are. Well, you have to love the person they are and you have to allow them to become that even if you don't feel comfortable with the "are" that they are.

So yes, it would be the same process. It's just that the spirituality is another complicating factor. All couples would come in with symbiotic fusion. I'm a Democrat; you're a Republican. How do we live in the same household? Or I like vegetarian; you like meat. Or we like sex, you know, twice a week or missionary position and maybe some variety.

Everybody's got this "my world" out here and want you to move into my world. So the religious variable is simply--in my mind--another of the challenges that come for surrendering the idiosyncratic, the idiosyncratic centrality that most of us have about who we are. Like you know, before Copernicus, we thought the Earth was the center of the universe, and then he comes along and says, "You know what? It's the Earth moving and the sun is stable." And that so, was so shocking nobody paid attention to it for 100 years until Galileo built this telescope, and he said, "You know what? Galileo was right. We are moving and the sun is stable."

But we all have this sense of centric consciousness, whether you are religious, conservative or even grossly progressive, there's still a centrality. So that what I find is everybody has to go through that crucible of surrendering the idiosyncratic world they live so they can actually see, meet and know another person because love begins after knowledge and prior to knowledge, you're loving an illusion, that is, the person you want them to be. After knowledge, you love the person. That's when love begins is when you appear in your absolute otherness, then I'm challenged to love you but until then, I like you

and I love you because you fit into all of my...

Wyatt: Dreams.

Hendrix: ...dreams and assumptions and needs—or at least I think you do until you differentiate and say, “I really don’t like vanilla ice cream.”

“Oh, you don’t?”

So “get back in the picture, please.”

Wyatt: It reminds me, it reminds me of two Christians that married, that I saw later in couples therapy and one was kind of service Christian—Habitat for Humanity, helped others, helped his family, earned money, gave it away—while his wife was very prayerful. Got together in small ways with her friends, was a very kind person, was very feeling-oriented. And they thought each other’s Christianity was bizarre.

Hendrix: Yeah. And totally incompatible.

Wyatt: Right.

Hendrix: Yeah.

Wyatt: But over time they learned, “wow.” And when a crisis came and she saw him be such a giving, forgiving person in action. She was like, wow. She felt humbled by it, and vice versa; some things happened with him.

Hendrix: They discovered the person behind the cognitive structures...

Wyatt: Right.

Hendrix: ...and religious things. And also, the really wise couple there would say, “You know, those are two ends of a polarity: the social investment and the private. And what if they began to move toward each other, you know, so that, because after all, Jesus did both.”

Wyatt: Well, a million things can happen. I think sometimes there’s a view in many particular Christian circles, one or the other, all different kinds, that there’s one way. And couples almost never are the same way, it seems to me.

Hendrix: Oh, no. No. It's the recipe for boredom. Incompatibility is the grounds for committed partnership in marriage. And I think nature set it up so that these polarities would be attracted to each other, because that's where the dynamic, oscillating energy of growth and change occurs. You have two things that are alike, there's no energy between them.

All energy is polar, and you're an energetic source. I'm an energetic source, and when we meet—I mean, we have a good a conversation today because we're different and, you know, we have this oscillation and it feels like there's a flow here. Well, that's because there's some opposite—some polarity. Not opposition, but polarity. And when you marry somebody, they're going to be a polarity, and that's the way nature set it up, so that you wouldn't be bored.

Compatibility is the grounds for boredom.

Wyatt: Well, this has been anything but boring today.

Hendrix: Thank you.

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Harville Hendrix, PhD, Featured Interviewee, is a Clinical Pastoral Counselor who is known internationally for his work with couples. Dr. Hendrix and his wife, Dr. Helen LaKelly Hunt, are co-founders, with other Imago therapists, of Imago Relationships International (IRI). Harville is the President of the Imago International Institute, the education division of IRI. He holds a PhD in Psychology and Theology from the University of Chicago and has received an honorary doctorate and two distinguished service awards.

Harville and Helen's partnership and collaboration has resulted in nine books on intimate relationships and parenting, including the popularly acclaimed, *Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples*, *Keeping the Love You Find: A Guide for Singles*, *The Couples Companion: Meditations and Exercises for Getting the Love You Want* and *The Personal Companion: Meditations and Exercises for Keeping the Love You Find*. Harville has appeared on many national television and radio shows, and his work has been written about in numerous newspapers and magazines internationally. He and Helen collaborated on *Getting the Love You Want: The Home Video Workshop*, an award winning public television series introduced and endorsed by Oprah Winfrey.

Harville and Helen have six children and live in New York and New Mexico.

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